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**FRANK P. PETRONE**  
*Supervisor*

**STATEMENT BY COUNCILWOMAN SUSAN A. BERLAND**  
**BEFORE THE ISLIP TOWN PLANNING BOARD**

**APRIL 16, 2015**

My name is Susan Berland. I am a member of the Huntington Town Board, having served in my position for 14 years. I am here on behalf of the residents of my Town and offer these comments on behalf of myself, Supervisor Frank Petrone and my colleagues on the Huntington Town Board.

It is unusual for a Town Board member to appear before a Planning Board, even more so because this is the Planning Board of my neighboring town, the Town of Islip.

However, the consequences of the zoning classification that you are considering—the Pilgrim State Planned Redevelopment District and Heartland Town Square—are so far reaching, that they demand our voice be on the record.

Long Island today is a different place than when I was first elected in 2001. Smart growth, mixed-use and multi-family residences have a strong following as we look for new strategies to encourage workforce housing and those looking for options other than the traditional single family home. We see it in Ronkonkoma and Wyandanch and we see it in Huntington Station. We have a responsibility to bring in jobs, create new opportunities and revive communities that have fallen on hard times.

I get it. Believe me I get it.

It is a misnomer, though, to call this application a mere zone change. Fifteen million square feet of development, on this piece of property, will change the landscape of Long Island forever.

Given the scope of this project, Supervisor Petrone advised the Suffolk County Planning Commission five years ago that the county and towns surrounding Heartland need to reach a consensus on infrastructure improvements and begin those infrastructure improvements BEFORE any decision is made by the Town of Islip.

Huntington went on the record during the comment period on the proposed Final GEIS and raised a series of technical questions which all relate to the central issue: How will Heartland manage the enormous structural demands a project of this magnitude will have on



- The Sagtikos Parkway
- The Long Island Expressway and its Service Roads
- Commack Road, Crooked Hill Road and other local roads

Let's talk about the effect on Commack Road. The Draft GEIS contained no general access to Commack Road. Boy, were we happy in Huntington when we read that!

Then the Final GEIS comes out, and lo and behold, now there is full access to Commack Road. This is a major change which will have a major effect on the residents of the Town of Huntington and anyone who uses Commack Road.

The Islip Town Board adopted the Final GEIS, gave short shrift to Huntington's objections and left critical questions unanswered.

- Are the public improvements that will be necessary to support this project going to be planned and implemented?
- When will the highway upgrades be built? Will they be built at all?
- Who exactly will pay for these major upgrades? Heartland? The Taxpayers?

Can anyone really expect us to wait until Heartland is nearly finished before any public improvements are planned or built?

As I speak tonight, the New York State Department of Transportation is holding a planning meeting to decide how to develop a plan to upgrade the Sagtikos to accommodate the tripling of rush hour traffic predicted by this project.

Yes. The State is working on a plan to develop a plan!!!

And tonight of all nights??

I call that "Dis-Heartening!"

Will the actual cost be \$200 million, as estimated in the Final GEIS? Will it be twice that? More still?

The point is that no one really knows.

Until a commitment, plans and guarantees for all necessary public infrastructure improvements are in place; until Islip can assure Heartland's neighbors that this project can be built in harmony with the towns and communities around it; and until the Final GEIS converts back to no general access to Commack Road as reflected in the Draft GEIS, the Islip Planning Board and Town Board should withhold a decision on this matter.

As one town official to another, I urge care and I urge caution. Huntington is pro-development and we welcome progress -- as long as the planning, preparation and infrastructure investment is sound.